

Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation (OPRE):

Programs to Strengthen Marriages and Families

## **BUILDING STRONG FAMILIES**

### **PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this project is to evaluate healthy marriage services for romantically involved low-income, unwed parents around the time of the birth of a child.

The BSF project entails three major components: providing technical assistance to develop programs and selecting evaluation sites, documenting and analyzing program implementation, and conducting impact analysis. Following carefully developed program guidelines, selected BSF projects provide instruction and support to improve relationship and marriage skills, enhance couples' understanding of marriage, and to help couples to focus on the needs of their new child.

Research shows that many unwed couples are romantically involved at the time of their child's birth, are interested in the well-being of their child, and hope and expect to marry each other. Nevertheless, in the absence of any help, these aspirations and hopes for a marriage together are seldom realized. This project is an important opportunity to learn whether well-designed programs and services can help couples fulfill their aspirations for a healthy marriage.

**CONTRACTOR:** Mathematica Policy Research, Inc.; subcontractors: MDRC; The Urban Institute, and Decision Information Resources.

**PROJECT PERIOD:** September 2002 to September 2011

**FUNDING:** \$4.1 million